

breeder has 10 litters that average only 2 puppies each for a total of 20 puppies, they can sell them without being regulated. These breeders could also sell 25 or fewer other dogs a year not bred or raised on their own premises such as stud puppies or puppies from coowner- ships, without being regulated. I firmly believe that the sport and hobby of breeding and raising dogs and cats should not be a federally regulated activity. PAWS will, for the first time, put an explicit exemption into the Animal Welfare Act to protect small hobby and show breeders from regulation.

Some persons who sell dogs for hunting purposes have expressed a concern that PAWS will bring them under regulation. The current Animal Welfare Act already covers persons who sell hunting dogs, and has for almost 30 years. They are regulated on the same basis as those who sell dogs for pets. PAWS will continue to regulate sellers of hunting dogs on the same basis as those who sell dogs as pets. Only high volume sellers who exceed the exemptions set forth in PAWS will be subject to regulation.

Some rescue and shelter organizations have expressed concern that because they often charge an adoption fee to those who adopt the dogs they place, these organizations will fall within the definition of "dealers" in PAWS and be regulated. True rescue and shelter organizations who do not sell dogs or cats in commerce, for profit, will not be brought under regulation by PAWS, whether or not they are formally incorporated as not for profit organizations.

Some high volume dealers in cats and dogs who will be brought under coverage of the Animal Welfare Act by PAWS, but who are still small enough that they breed and raise dogs or cats in essentially a residential environment, have expressed concern that they will be forced to build kennels and catteries and will no longer be able to raise animals in a residential environment. There is nothing in PAWS, or in the current Animal Welfare Act, that precludes persons from breeding and raising animals in a residential setting, provided the animals are properly housed and cared for. In implementing PAWS, the Secretary of Agriculture will have to assure that the animal care regulations take into account breeders and dealers who conduct their operations in a residential setting.

I want to make clear that PAWS is a very different piece of legislation than the bills that Senator DURBIN and I have introduced in previous Congresses. PAWS does not require or justify creating any new animal care standards, like our previous legislation did. It focuses only on bringing under regulation high volume commercial dealers currently evading regulation and on strengthening the Secretary of Agriculture's ability to identify and bring into compliance high volume dealers who are not in compliance with existing law or, as a last resort, shut them down.

Senator DURBIN and I in the Senate, along with our colleagues Representatives GERLACH and FARR who have introduced PAWS in the House of Representatives, consulted with a broad array of animal interest and animal welfare groups in creating PAWS. We believe that the enactment of PAWS will be a major milestone in the history of animal protection in the United States. We are delighted that it has brought together animal interest groups and animal welfare groups that in the past have often been on opposite sides of animal legislation, including our own past bills. Having said that, no legislation is perfect when introduced. As chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Research, Nutrition and General Legislation, which has jurisdiction over PAWS, I intend to convene a hearing and mark-up of PAWS shortly after the August recess to make technical corrections, and to clarify some of the bill's language to better reflect our intentions as set forth in this statement.

PAWS is not intended to restrict breeding or impose a hardship on rescue and shelter organizations. PAWS specifically recognizes the importance of protecting small breeders and the noncommercial purebred dog and cat fancy from Federal regulation. My family and I purchased our beloved German shepherd dog Schatzie from a small breeder. We and Schatzie raised a litter of puppies in our own home last year, and fully understand the hard work and commitment that it requires. I also know that most commercial breeders are dedicated to their profession and to their animals. I believe that PAWS will protect small hobby and show breeders and the vast majority of compliant commercial breeders as well as the public from those breeders and brokers who evade or fail to comply with the law. And, most importantly, it will protect the animals themselves. I urge my colleagues and all those in the animal welfare community to join us in this effort.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today with great joy to congratulate the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, on its 75th anniversary. Through its tireless work on behalf of this Nation's veterans, VA has certainly lived up to the words of the great President Abraham Lincoln, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and his widow, and his orphan." During its first 75 years, VA has done much to benefit not only veterans and their families but also the nation as a whole.

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Montgomery GI bill into public law. Since then, the GI bill has been updated and modernized several times. This far-reaching legislation has helped improve the lives of over 20 million veterans through educational programs,

home loan guarantees, unemployment compensation, and other benefits. It is estimated that over the lifetime of the average veteran, the U.S. Treasury receives two to eight times the income tax from the average veteran than was spent on the veteran's GI bill benefits. The GI bill is undoubtedly one of the most important pieces of legislation in this Nation's great history.

VA has also established a legacy of first rate health care for our veterans. A recent study by the RAND Corporation found that VA outpaces private health care systems in delivering care to patients. RAND observed that VA patients were more likely to receive recommended health services than patients using a private provider. The study also concluded that VA patients consistently receive better care across the board, including screening, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.

Additionally, VA's Medical and Prosthetics Research Program has led to substantial advances in prosthetics, traumatic injury, post traumatic stress disorder, as well as many other areas that have helped our veterans over the years. This research has also led to discoveries in medicine that effect both veterans and the general population, such as cancer, aging, mental illness, and heart disease. In fact, past VA research projects have resulted in the first successful kidney transplant performed in the U.S., as well as the development of the cardiac pacemaker, a vaccine for hepatitis, and the CAT and MRI scans.

Another function of VA is overseeing our National Cemetery System. VA has helped create and manage a network of Federal and State cemeteries that provides deceased veterans with a respectful and peaceful final resting place.

The far-reaching accomplishments that I briefly highlighted are just a few cornerstones of the Department's legacy. With the current military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, we appreciate even more the quality work that VA does for our veterans. And the current operations should also be a reminder to VA and Congress of the burdens our veterans face because of their sacrifices to protect our freedoms and liberties.

I am extremely proud of the work VA has done, and I hope that through greater cooperation between Congress and the administration, we can expand upon VA's legacy and address the current needs of our veterans. I must also highlight the dedication of the staff that has worked at VA over the years. An agency as massive as VA would cease to function without quality leadership and staff. Many of VA's staff have a deep and passionate commitment to providing quality health care and benefits for our veterans.

Our Nation's veterans and service-members deserve nothing less than top quality health care and benefits. I am sure that Congress and VA can work together to fulfill this obligation. Once again, I congratulate VA on 75 years of service to our veterans.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ELVIN OREN CRAIG

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to honor the life of a special Idahoan who is also the father of my colleague from Idaho, Senator LARRY CRAIG. Elvin Oren Craig, who passed away last week, left many legacies and will be missed by many people. In Idaho, he served as a lifelong advocate for Idaho agriculture, and a leader in Washington County, Midvale and Weiser. He also was very active in his local VFW Post in Midvale, ID. At 87 years old, he had remained active despite a diagnosis of prostate cancer. In fact, he worked until only about 6 months ago when he decided it might be time to let up a little bit. Elvin Craig's legacy also lives on in my colleague and in Senator CRAIG's consistent and honorable service to Idahoans over his years in public office. I know that Elvin was proud of his son's service to Idaho and the country—first in the Idaho State Senate, then in the U.S. House of Representatives, and now in the U.S. Senate.

Elvin's family and friends know of his community service and his persistent commitment over many years to Idaho's farmers and ranchers and his own family. He worked hard while maintaining his sense of humor. His full life was an outstanding example of what it means to be an Idahoan. I am pleased to pay tribute to a remarkable man, Elvin Oren Craig, and to share my condolences to my friend, LARRY CRAIG, and his family upon the passing of a great man.

SECOND AMENDMENT PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill that would withhold United States contributions to the United Nations if the U.N. interferes with the second amendment rights guaranteed by our Constitution.

The U.N. has no business interfering with the second amendment rights guaranteed by our Constitution. That is why I am introducing legislation to safeguard our citizens against any potential infringement of their second amendment rights.

In July, 2001, the U.N. convened a conference, known as the "Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001." One outcome of the conference was a resolution entitled, "The United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects." This resolution calls for actions that could abridge the second amendment rights of individuals in the United States, including: (1) national registries and tracking lists of legal firearms; (2) the establishment of an international tracking certificate, which could be used to ensure U.N. monitoring of the export, import, transit, stocking, and

storage of legal small arms and light weapons; and (3) worldwide record keeping for an indefinite amount of time on the manufacture, holding, and transfer of small arms and light weapons.

The U.N. also wishes to establish a system for tracking small arms and light weapons. How would they do this? It would be done by forcing legal, licensed gun manufacturer's to create identifiable marks for each nation. The gun manufacturer's lists would then be provided to international authorities on behalf of the U.N.

Who would maintain these intrusive lists? Would it be the World Customs Organization, which the U.N. has suggested as a possible vehicle? That organization counts Iran, Syria, China, and Cuba among its membership. Would all World Customs Organization members have access to such lists? In the event that those with access to such information abuse or misuse it, what would be the remedy? How would we prevent unauthorized persons, perhaps criminals and terrorists, from acquiring such information from rogue nations who have declared the United States an enemy?

Some at the U.N. have suggested that tracing certain financial transactions of a legal and law abiding gun industry could be a useful tool in tracking firearms. What would such tracing entail? Does the U.N. expect to receive private U.S. banking records of a legal and law abiding industry?

Furthermore, the U.N. has encouraged member States to integrate measures to control ammunition with regard to small arms, and some members have expressed a desire to tax international arms sales. The U.N. has no legal right or authority to collect a tax from American citizens to further any agenda, especially gun control measures.

The U.S. Constitution has guaranteed our citizens the right to keep and bear arms. I intend to help protect that right with this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support the Second Amendment Protection Act of 2005.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

Last year, an African-American transgender woman was brutally beaten, raped, and strangled in a San Francisco hotel. The murder is under investigation and anti-transgender bias has been looked into as a motive.

I believe that the government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend

them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS AND THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last month, the debate over the nomination of Judge William Pryor to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals included a discussion of Judge Pryor's call to repeal section 5 of the Voting Rights Act—the centerpiece of that landmark statute—because, as he asserted in congressional testimony, it "is an affront to federalism and an expensive burden that has far outlived its usefulness." His testimony demonstrated that Judge Pryor is more concerned with preventing an "affront" to the States' dignity than with guaranteeing all citizens the right to cast an equal vote.

In the Republican defense of Judge Pryor, it was suggested that Congressman JOHN LEWIS, a stalwart leader of the civil rights movement, somehow agreed with Judge Pryor's opposition to section 5 of the Voting Rights Act because of a statement Congressman LEWIS had made about a specific redistricting plan.

Congressman LEWIS has made clear many times, most recently in a July 14 letter to me, his disagreement with the views of Judge Pryor and his strong support for the Voting Rights Act—and particularly section 5. Congressman LEWIS wrote:

Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act must be renewed. There is a continued, proven need for the pre-clearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act, which ensure that local and state jurisdiction do not develop laws that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against groups who may have little or no voice in the establishment of those laws.

His statements of support for one particular redistricting plan in no way diminish his commitment to the Voting Rights Act.

Congressman LEWIS believes, as do I, that the Voting Rights Act is our most important protection guaranteeing that no individuals or groups are without a voice in this democracy. As he so eloquently noted:

The history of the right to vote in America is a history of conflict, of struggling for the right to vote. Many people died trying to protect that right. I was beaten and jailed because I stood up for it. For millions like me, the struggle for the right to vote is not mere history; it is experience. The experience of the last two presidential elections tells us that the struggle is not over and that the special provisions of the Voting Rights Act are still necessary.

I ask unanimous consent that Congressman LEWIS's letter be printed in the RECORD at the end of my statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)